Author’s response to reviews

Title: Transversus abdominis plane block with general anesthesia blunts the perioperative stress response in patients undergoing radical gastrectomy

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear editor,

Thank you for your letter and for the reviewers’ comments concerning our manuscript entitled “Combining transversus abdominis plane block with general anesthesia blunts the perioperative stress response in patients undergoing radical gastrectomy”. Those comments are all valuable and very helpful for revising and improving our paper, as well as the important guiding significance to our researches. We have studied comments carefully and have made corrections which we hope meet with approval. Revised portion are visible using the track changes option in the paper. The main corrections in the paper and the responds to the reviewer’s comments are as follows:

Point-by-point response to the reviewer’s comments

Reviewer #1:

Comment 1: Idea; Not New, expected and have many limitations
Response: Thanks for your valuable comments. Subcostal transversus abdominis plane block is mainly used in cesarean section, and there are relatively few reports on the application of subcostal transversus abdominis plane block in radical gastrectomy. Gastric cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers around the world, and surgical resection is currently the mainstay of curative treatment for this cancer. Therefore, we designed this study to assess whether subcostal transversus abdominis plane block can affect perioperative neuroendocrine stress response, postoperative analgesia and postoperative recovery in patients undergoing radical gastrectomy under general anesthesia. This is a preliminary study, and there are really some limitations. Therefore, a more comprehensive trial are need in the future. This has been mentioned in the end of the limitation part.

Comment 2: Title: Combining transversus abdominis plane block with general anesthesia blunts the perioperative stress response in patients undergoing radical gastrectomy: I advise to change to Transversus abdominis plane block with general anesthesia blunts the perioperative stress response in patients undergoing radical gastrectomy.

Response: Thanks for your valuable comments, and the title has been revised as “Transversus abdominis plane block with general anesthesia blunts the perioperative stress response in patients undergoing radical gastrectomy” according to your suggestion.

Comment 3: Abstract:

(1) The aim of the study in the background section needs to be described in a better English language.

(2) Background: English language needs improvement as there are lots of typos, grammar mistakes and unclear sentences that need to be addressed. The aim of the study should be better described.

(3) The primary endpoint and Secondary endpoints changed to the primary outcome and Secondary outcome

Response: Thanks for your valuable comments.

(1-2) We have re-written the background section, as follows:

Background: Surgical stress induces the release of neuroendocrine mediators and cytokines during perioperative period, which may have adverse effects on cancer patients. While the surgical stress response can be affected by anesthetic technique. Therefore, we designed this study to assess whether subcostal transversus abdominis plane (TAP) block can affect perioperative neuroendocrine stress response, postoperative analgesia and postoperative recovery in patients undergoing radical gastrectomy under general anesthesia.
The “primary endpoint” and “secondary endpoints” have been replaced by “primary outcome” and “secondary outcomes” according to your suggestions.

Comment 4: Methods:
(1) Again, a lot of grammar and spelling mistakes needs to be addressed.
(2) Change material and methods to Methods
(3) Operation process: internal oblique abs??? what you meant
(4) Please clarify Sample size Calculations
(5) Give more statistical details

Response: Thanks for your valuable comments.
(1) We are very sorry for grammar and spelling mistakes in text, and we have checked the whole manuscript and made some changes to minimize such mistakes. These changes will not influence the content and framework of the paper. And here we did not list the changes but used track changes in revised paper.
(2) The “Material and methods” has been changed to “Methods” according to your suggestion.
(3) The “internal oblique abs” means “obliquus internus abdominis”, and “internal oblique abs” has been revised as “obliquus internus abdominis”.
(4) The sample size calculation has been mentioned on line 157-159, as follows: “Based on sample size analysis performed using PASS 11.0 (NCSS Statistical Software, Kaysville, UT), with $\alpha = 0.05$ and $\beta = 0.2$, a minimum sample of 25 cases in each group was required, respectively”.
(5) We are very appreciated for your expectation that you need more statistical details. and we also cherish this opportunity of revision to further improve our papers. However, all the statistical method involved in the current study have been described on line 161-168, and the sample size calculation is mentioned on line 157-159. We are very sorry that we don’t know what details you want to add, and we are looking forward to getting more specific comments so as to start the revision as soon as possible.

Comment 5: Results: Give images to explain your approach
Response: Thanks for your valuable comments. We have provided a supplementary figure to show the study processes, and we have added a sentence of “The study processes are shown in supplementary Figure 1.” on line 153.
Comment 6: Discussion: All are expected and have many limitations

(1) No limitation of the study: Please mentioned as a separate Paragraph with its head in bald form

Response: Thanks for your valuable comments. We have mentioned the limitation as a separate Paragraph with its head in bald form according to your suggestion.

Special thanks to you for your good comments.

We tried our best to improve the manuscript and made some changes in the manuscript. These changes will not influence the content and framework of the paper. And here we did not list the changes but used track changes in revised paper.

We appreciate for Editors/Reviewers’ warm work earnestly, and hope that the correction will meet with approval.

Once again, thank you very much for your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely

Guoqing Zhao